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Latin--What's the Use?

by Elfriede Ackermann, Von Steuben High School, Chicago, Ill.

In my library, there is an old-fashioned book of sermons, among which is one entitled: "Is life worth living?" The succinct answer to that more or less rhetorical question was: "That depends on the liver". To make a worse pun, one might answer to-day's question of "Latin, what's the use," by saying that it depends on the "youth," and the user. If I had the gall, I should like to imitate Caesar, and divide all possible users into three parts: first, those who have had no actual contact with Latin: second, those who have had an unfortunate experience with it; and third, (horum omnium fortissimi), those who dare to say that they have found it worth while.

The first is by far the largest group, in fact, the largest percentage of those who attend our secondary schools, where presumably intelligence receives a modicum of attention. This group includes not only the young who seek guidance, but also the teachers, administrators, counselors, and parents, who are ordained to give it. This group enjoys speaking of the classical languages as "dead", hence obviously useless. It is comparatively easy for them to prove to their own satisfaction that Latin is neither necessary nor useful in selling canned goods, in exchanging conviviality with equally endowed companions, or in enjoying the TV and radio programs that soothe their leisure hours. Perhaps, though not very likely, this group may indulge in the great intellectual sport of solving cross-word puzzles. What it can solve cross-word puzzles without "aes", "iter", "via", "onus", "opus", and the Greek alphabet is difficult to fathom. And mirabile dictu, the same ones who call Latin dead also call it highbrow, hence unworthy the attention of the common man, than which there seems to be no nobler animal. To them, all Latin is on the level of the pig-Latin of their childhood: to the question, "Latin, What's the use?" they answer quite honestly "There ain't no use" or agree with the little old lady who, very much concerned over her granddaughter's interest in "furrin tongues" wondered why the young women just couldn't use only English the rest of her life, "the way Jesus did."

It is futile to refute. We may as well admit that one can get along in this world without Latin, just as one can live without reading, or chemistry, or music, or porkchops, or cummerbunds, or intelligence. One does not need Latin to enjoy food, to beget offspring, to belong to the local social set, to make money, or to become a congressman. In fact, in some of the activities just mentioned, a knowledge of Latin may even prove a distinct handicap.

The second group of possible users consists of those who have had an unfortunate experience in Latin. Possibly they had an uninspired teacher who himself was not convinced of its value, and who transmitted this attitude to his students. In the public high schools of Illinois, for example, where Latin still holds the first place (being taught in nearly five-hundred of the 1058 schools offering any foreign language), there are undoubtedly some pupils who can not see the wood for the trees, and who fail to effect transfer of training. More probably, however, the "unfortunate experience" is hereditary and congenital. The low or failing grades that the student received indicated that he was, bluntly speaking, too dull to grasp the basic material, and, per corollary, too dull to make use of it. The necessary learning of grammatical forms seemed to him useless, the drill a waste of time. The ensuing difficulty caused an emotional strain, the poor youngster was frustrated, and was only too happy to be released from his suffering by being transferred to a subject where ostensibly he could learn by doing (no matter what) and preferably without thinking. This group, too, indulges in ridicule and parody, if not downright invective and in it are to be found the most vehement opponents of Latin to-day.

We come to the third group, of which all here present are representative. We have had Latin, and enjoyed it. Moreover, we are living examples of its vocational value, and I see no emaciated figures among us. Latin dead? It is used by thousands upon thousands of clergymen in their daily vocational life, it is used as an intercommunication system in the sciences, every plant and animal has a Latin genus and species name, without which understanding would be difficult. Doctors still use Latin in writing prescriptions, and pharmacists are grateful that they can charge one dollar for "spiritus frumenti," when grain alcohol of the same quantity and quality would bring them only twenty-five cents. Lawyers, scholars, writers, need Latin; for practical purposes, as well as for general research.

Here some one may interpose the objection, that the persons mentioned are adult, form only a small percentage of the population, and are not convincing evidence of the need of Latin in high school--the real heart of our problem at this meeting. An obvious rejoinder is: Each level of education should add to the stature of the individual, and should be implemented by studies that attain the desired aim. At the elementary level, one accepts without question the fundamentals; reading, speaking, arithmetic, and elementary concepts of the world about. Remembering is easy, interests are fortunately few and relatively simple.

However, at the high school age, when the struggle for personal and intellectual independence begins, intelligent young people question the validity of every concept. They must be shown the value of accuracy, of genuine knowledge as distinguished from guess work and wishful thinking, of the need for a solid foundation for their house of the future. They can and will understand if you point out to them that Latin is no more dead than a tree whose roots are underground, and that these living roots bring nourishment both for the leaves and fruits of the tree, and that without these roots there would be no tree at all. The universality of Latin is its great and abiding strength, and other "undergrounds" have demonstrated their power.

One of the chief arguments for the teaching of Latin in high school is its contribution to English. I am well aware that some Latin teachers are not too fond of this idea, and prefer to teach Latin for its own sake. But since, in common with TV manufacturers, meat-packers and used car dealers we want to sell our wares, we may as well indulge in this bit of useful and truthful advertising. No one will deny that English teachers also are undergoing mortal agony to get results in their field. To obtain even a modicum of accuracy, they try to teach "functional" grammar, hopping frantically from one type of error to another, trying to explain in terms that are meaningless to most students, and that leave them more confused than ever. Lesson One may be on sentence sense, if any, lesson two on subject and predicate, with the awful predicate noun, lesson three on dangling participles, lesson four on past participles, as if the two had any parallel construction, and so on ad infinitum and ad nauseam. A millenium is reached if pupils can recognize the parts of speech. With Latin, however, even with the streamlined textbooks in which the illustrations are so fascinating that the eye often receives more pleasure than the mind nourishment, there is need not only for recognition of the parts of speech, but also of their function. Nouns, pronouns, and adjectives do have gender, number and case, which not only must be learned, but which must be absorbed by that most potent of visual aids, the human eye. Verbs do have tense, mood, voice, person, and number, and there is such a thing as visible agreement. Through Latin, and perhaps only through Latin, can these functions be thoroughly understood. This is "functional" grammar and should not be confounded with the "accidental" grammar. Most of you have had the experience of having students return to you to say, "all the English grammar I ever learned was through Latin." A possible addition would be German.

It is almost unnecessary here to dilate on the connection between size and accuracy of one's English vocabulary and one's study of Latin. We who use English or American as a vernacular are really using two languages combined (Latin and Germanic), a fact which gives untold wealth to our tongue, and enables us to disguise as well as express our thoughts. You may say "We consumed cucurbitaceous fruit for our matutinal repast", and astound the boobery with your erudition; or you may say "We ate melons for breakfast" and charm your hearers with your democracy. Those with a knowledge of Latin will have multiplied their vocabulary by at least ten for every Latin root learned, and that multiplication can lead to astronomical figures. With this increase in vocabulary, comes, we hope, an increase in discrimination, and in understanding. This two-edged sword should help in routing the hobgoblins of ignorance and slipshoddiness that beset our days. We talk about the value and necessity of communication, and of the semantics that deal with interpretation. What finer basis of communication than a knowledge of the true meaning of words, and the variations that arise through time and circumstance. Our short, incisive, everyday language meant to express our emotions simply and clearly, like "Go to hell" is generally Anglo-Saxon; our thoughtful, considered, scientific, intellectual communication is generally clothed in words of classic derivation. Here, parenthetically, may lie one cause of the distrust that the average person has for the highbrow--because he seems to be clothed in a mumbo-jumbo of words that the average man cannot understand, hence somehow to savor of black magic and the devil.

Thus far, I have spoken mainly of the gains in communication to be derived through a knowledge of Latin. There is one other phase with which I should like to close. All knowledge should lead to wisdom, which is the ability and the desire to apply knowledge to its noblest ends. What can one do in high school to start students on this long and arduous road? One may not be able to read with his students all the works that contain the gems, but it is certainly possible to bring in somewhere, even in a two-year Latin course, some thoughts from Cicero, from Virgil, from Horace, Livy, Lucretius, and Tacitus, that say beautifully what we are trying so desperately to achieve to-day. Exempla gratia:

for Brotherhood: "Homo sum nihil humanum mihi alienum puto";
for Poetry: "Monumentum exegi aere perennius";
for Peace: "Ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant
(Hiroshima).

for the Value of Study: "These studies nourish youth, delight old age, adorn prosperity, offer comfort in adversity, give pleasure at home, add stature abroad, help endure sleepless nights, are companions in travel, and even make country life civilized."

Of course, we are talking to ourselves here. Every one present, I hope, belongs to the dedicated and chosen few who have seen the light. As for the others, who are not here, I am reminded of a few lines scribbled on a blank space in my well-thumbed copy of Cicero:

"You may as well go stand upon the beach,
And bid the main flood bate its usual height
You may as well forbid the mountain pines
To wag their high tops to make no noise
As to seek to change that than which what's more obstinate
One's mind once made upon a certain point."

The German poet Schiller says it even more tersely:
"Mit der Dummheit kämpfen selbst die Götter vergebens"--
(The gods themselves wage a losing battle against stupidity).

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Bernanos et son roman "L'Imposture"

by J.-J. Demorest, Duke University

Il est de dures victoires. L'honneur ne ménage pas les siens. On n'est pas impunément l'auteur d'une oeuvre aussi exceptionnelle que Sous le soleil de Satan. D'emblée, Bernanos y avait atteint une qualité de puissance inconnue dans le roman français. Pouvait-il se maintenir sans se répéter?

Un art, fondé sur une volonté farouche de communiquer au roman l'épaisseur surnaturelle du monde chrétien, saurait-il échapper à l'absolu de sa théologie morale? Le surnaturalisme de Bernanos serait-il prisonnier de quelques visages, de quelques péchés toujours reliés par un même mystère? Réussirait-il à surmonter ses défauts de composition, son effroi intense et son silence à l'orée de la vision?

A Bagnères-de-Bigorre, quelques mois après la parution de son premier roman, Bernanos écrivait L'Imposture. Auprès de lui, son père se mourait--et sans doute, la surprenante description de l'agonie de l'abbé Chevance fut inspirée par cette épreuve. Il comptait nommer son roman: Les ténèbres. A-t-il prévu que ce titre offrirait une cible facile aux critiques de piètre esprit? Ou n'a-t-il pas voulu marquer la position capitale de l'imposture dans la hiérarchie des péchés? "Il y a belle lurette que le problème de l'imposture m'apparaît comme essentiel: qui le résoudrait aurait la clef de tous les autres, de tous ceux que pose le malheur de l'homme."¹

Toujours est-il que le titre d'origine répondait aux profondeurs nocturnes du roman, aussi bien qu'à l'état d'âme particulier de Bernanos à ce moment-là: "Je travaille dans le plus parfait dénuement intérieur, à tâtons. Ce que j'écris me semble un balbutiement misérable. Il ne tiendrait qu'à moi de rouler commodément en palier. Mais j'aime mieux tâcher de grimper; j'aime mieux grimper. Si je rate la côte, il reste à suivre l'exemple du vieux camarade Rimbaud."²

Treize ans plus tard, il nous dira encore: "C'est un livre qui m'a coûté beaucoup de peine, dont je suis sorti ébranlé comme d'une épreuve au-dessus de mes forces."³ Monsieur Quine lui en coûta autant, sinon plus. Ce n'est pas un hasard, L'Imposture nous semble appeler Monsieur Quine. On cherchera plus loin à relever leurs points de rencontre et la communauté de leurs formules romanesques.

L'Imposture est une oeuvre d'exploration, ou plutôt, une partition riche en thèmes dont les oeuvres postérieures tireront densité et cohérence. C'est pourquoi nous ne

saaurions souscrire à toutes les conséquences de l'opinion de M. Stanislas Fumet qui qualifie L'Imposture de "hors-d'oeuvre."⁴ Car, si rétrospectivement il nous arrivera de considérer ce roman comme une oeuvre d'essai, nous ne désirons pas en diminuer la portée. Nous ne questionnons pas l'effort que Bernanos lui a consacré, nous savons qu'il s'est donné entièrement à ce qu'il estimait être l'éclairage d'un problème essentiel à toute compréhension de l'homme. Ainsi, notre tentative de rattacher les romans de Bernanos à L'Imposture signifie la richesse d'invention que nous lui reconnaissons.

Dans L'Imposture, on est frappé de la manière dont l'intrigue est implacablement subordonnée à la découverte d'une âme et d'un seul vice. Le réalisme y est creusé jusqu'à la démesure. La mystique du péché est presque atteinte. Ce besoin de forer jusqu'à la faute mère répond à un programme. Ailleurs, parlant du mensonge, Bernanos a dit: "Il m'a toujours paru qu'une certaine perversion profonde...devait toujours finir par ouvrir au plus secret d'un être la source d'où jaillit la vie mystique."⁵

L'originalité de L'Imposture est dans une illustration dramatique de l'extase du néant--extase à laquelle fait pendant celle de la vie en Dieu décrite dans La joie--sa nouveauté est dans la complexité de la possession satanique telle que Bernanos la découvre. Après Sous le soleil de Satan, on ne rencontre plus le Diable comme personnage, mais comme énergie interne. Il devient un "tiers invisible." A partir de L'Imposture, donc, les pécheurs sont esclaves de Satan à travers eux-mêmes. Ils deviennent Satan, un amour ignoble les porte à se préférer au bien comme au mal, à se rouler de volupté contre l'Etre caché qui leur glace l'éternité. La marque du pécheur, dans les romans après L'Imposture, sera de ne plus même s'aimer, de recéler l'Ami de toutes les haines, le Maître du vide. L'abbé Cénabre est le premier de cette race.

Comme Monsieur Ouine, Cénabre est allé jusqu'au bout de lui-même, jusqu'au silence de l'abîme. L'analyse de Cénabre, l'imposteur, est la raison de ce roman. Tout tient à lui, Bernanos le précise dans une lettre écrite alors qu'il travaillait à L'Imposture: "Mon mauvais prêtre, si je le mets une fois debout, s'y tiendra comme une tour."⁶ En effet, la rigidité de l'orgueil de Cénabre, ses trente années de mensonge devenu chair et substance, lui donnent une qualité massive à laquelle répondent sa carrure solide, son visage viril, épais et dur. Il est bien une tour, mais vide, délabrée de l'intérieur; et telle une tour il s'écroulera brutalement dans la nuit.

Bernanos expose impitoyablement les fissures de cet être puissamment damné. Et comme toujours, en fouillant les fondations du mal il étend les ténèbres, elles empruntent toutes les galeries pour s'échapper du sol, elles envahissent le monde du roman et enveloppent saints et maudits. Nous n'entendons pas par là que Bernanos pioche frénétiquement, aveuglément, une matière jamais saisie, jamais éclairée. Au contraire, l'analyse de Cénabre est cruelle de clarté, l'étude de la transformation de son orgueil en mensonge, puis en haine, est magistrale. Mais la nuit est au bout. A tel point que, bien des années plus tard, Bernanos avoue: "Je ne crois plus aux imposteurs depuis que j'ai écrit L'imposture, ou du moins je m'en fais une idée bien différent.... et la dernière ligne écrite, j'ignorais encore si l'abbé Cénabre était oui ou non imposteur, je l'ignore toujours, j'ai cessé de m'interroger là-dessus."⁷ N'est-ce pas ici cette part d'échec qui concilie surnaturalisme et humanisme? Du moins, cette incertitude même, quant au personnage, communique une valeur ambiguë à Cénabre. Car, il est ni méprisable, ni attachant, mais pitoyable et fascinant.

La démesure de pareille formule romanesque s'inscrit dans la volonté manifeste de ne pas s'arrêter. Bernanos ne nous permet pas de reprendre souffle aux abords de l'inconnu. Il ne saurait admettre que nous nous installions confortablement dans un poste d'observation à la frontière du mystère. Il nous entraîne avec lui. D'ailleurs, pour lui, la triste nuit est partout: en nous et hors de nous. Il suffit de penser à sa lecture surnaturelle de l'histoire contemporaine pour nous convaincre du fait.

Comment cette vue de l'homme s'accordera-t-elle au réalisme hallucinant que la critique est unanime à lui reconnaître? Par une référence constante à des êtres réels. Bernanos ne creuse pas un homme fictif, à quoi bon? Il déchire ceux qu'il voit, ceux qu'il étudie. Ce maître du préjugé exploité férocement jusqu'à ce que vérité s'ensuive, ne lâche plus ceux qu'il tient. On sait sans doute que Quine est à la fois Renan et Gide, que Saint-Marin est Anatole France, mais a-t-on remarqué qu'aucun roman de Bernanos n'illustre autant de "vedettes" que L'imposture?

Le lamentable Pernichon, lui, est Havard de la Montagne-c'est Bernanos qui nous renseigne: "M. Havard de la Montagne, par exemple, soucieux de ménager à la fois Rome et la rue de Rome, n'espionnait qu'à coup sûr et les volets clos, pour le compte de ses patrons, qu'il s'empressait de renier en plein jour--si du moins ce Pernichon à jamais pu se montrer quelque part en plein jour."⁸

Guérou, première ébauche de Ouine, est un Renan dégénéré. Et Cénabre? Les nombreuses allusions à son érudition, à ses recherches de longue haleine sur Les mystiques florentins, à sa rancune contre les hommes simples qu'il étudie, et à sa manière oblique d'écrire de la sainteté comme si la charité n'existait pas, tout paraît indiquer l'abbé Brémond. Le côté abbé monadain et académicien de Cénabre se rapproché assez, en somme, du mal que l'on peut penser de Brémond. Mais ce n'est là qu'une petite part de Cénabre. Nous avouerons que l'identité Brémond ne nous a jamais satisfait. Maintenant, il nous paraît que l'être réel sur qui l'imposteur se calque est Maurras. Nous reconnaissons les difficultés d'une telle interprétation. Nous n'ignorons pas que si Bernanos a démissionné de l'Action Française en 1919, sa rupture publique avec Maurras ne date que de 1932. Néanmoins, tout nous porte à croire qu'il avait jugé Maurras depuis longtemps. La dureté de Cénabre, son indifférence monstrueuse envers les autres, son orthodoxie douteuse, sa froideur concentrée, son orgueil dévorant, la grandeur de son imposture, tout rappelle Maurras. Et si Bernanos ne condamne pas Cénabre sans appel, s'il hésite à le vouer à la géhenne, s'il lui conserve la profondeur de son péché, à défaut de noblesse dans l'erreur, c'est qu'il n'a pas encore brisé avec Maurras, c'est qu'il se refuse à croire aux découvertes de sa propre imagination. Mais que les années passent et l'on constatera avec quelle régularité Maurras est évoqué aux côtés de L'Imposture.⁹ Bien sûr, Massis, Claudel et Montherlant le seront aussi, mais jamais à même rage. Telle page consacrée à Maurras pourrait s'appliquer rigoureusement à Cénabre:

La vérité, c'est qu'il ne croit pas plus à la raison qu'à la monarchie ou à l'Eglise, et il serait trop facile de dire qu'il ne croit qu'à lui-même, car il n'y croit pas non plus, ou il n'y croit que pour se haïr. Son orgueil lucide et glacé, devenu, avec les années, l'instrument de sa propre torture, lui fait sans doute trouver aujourd'hui quelque douceur dans la cynique abjection de ces derniers mois, il y réchauffe sa vieillesse.... Que Dieu le prenne en pitié!¹⁰

Ainsi, une des ambiguïtés de L'Imposture est dans l'assimilation troublante de plusieurs contemporains sous une commune identité romanesque. Cette référence permanente et indirecte à l'être réel, tasse le mystère d'une inquiétante substance charnelle. La réalité rend le protagoniste plus pitoyable mais plus obscur aussi: "...des imposteurs,

c'est-à-dire des gribouilles retournés. Retournés est le mot, retournés comme des doigts de gants, leur vraie peau est à l'intérieur, et ils exposent au soleil un envers vif et sanglant."11

Il est indéniable que dans L'Imposture Bernanos se montre trop. Il intervient, éclate, se retire en grommelant. Pour lui, la partie est serrée, il ne peut rester à l'écart. Cette tension trahit-elle plus qu'une gaucherie technique? Trahit-elle une certaine gêne à avoir profilé Maurras et Brémont en Cénabre? Ou ne fait-elle qu'annoncer la prochaine rentrée de Bernanos dans la grande polémique?

Bernanos en oublie le lecteur, il le repousse brutalement pour foncer sur la "Bête matérialiste." Et il n'est pas loin de nous lancer son fameux "Imbéciles!" tout vibrant d'indignation et d'amour. En tout cas, il se domine avec peine. Le roman s'en ressent, il paraît rompu, mal équilibré. Il s'y établit même ce trouble très particulier que l'on éprouve devant un ménage qui se dispute. Les intrusions de Bernanos révèlent son énervement devant des créatures, dont, pour étonnantes qu'elles soient, il est le pair. Enfin, peut-être ce mouvement d'irritation s'explique-t-il simplement par le fait que Bernanos lui-même ignore si Cénabre est un imposteur.

Il n'y a pas seulement intrusion tempestueuse de sa part, il y a aussi une tendance à l'intervention, qui, pour être réservée, n'est pas moins maladroite: "Et certes, pour autant qu'on puisse se faire juge en une telle cause, ici même, sans doute se consomma son destin."12

Parfois, bien qu'il ait accepté de rester présent dans son oeuvre, Bernanos n'est pas convaincu par sa créature, il insiste lourdement: "Mais un trait paraîtra plus incroyable encore...."(64). Dans sa description de Pernichon, notamment, il en dit beaucoup plus que dans le sobre Journal d'un curé de campagne ou dans l'étonnant Monsieur Quine. Il en dit trop: il juge, il qualifie. On pressent que Pernichon ne sera pas livré par le roman, ni délivré: il est déjà captif, déjà cerné par un verdict qui ne permet aucun espoir d'évasion. Au coeur d'une conversation (13), Bernanos en vient à ajouter des parenthèses explicatives, du coup l'attention se perd, la parole ne bat plus.

Le pire, le plus ahurissant, est de découvrir ici le ton feuilleton, le genre "cher confrère", le fausset d'un académicien, et cela chez un écrivain du fougueux tempérament de Bernanos!

... la célèbre bibliothèque dont le luxe sévère...(15).

... une simple étagère, mais où l'homme de goût peut admirer la plus jolie collection, et la plus, rare, de ces missels aux reliures naïves (15).

Quiconque l'eût observé à ce moment solennel eût été frappé... (24).

Qui eût entrevu à cet instant, par le trou de la serrure... (68).

De la même façon, l'allure pateline des premières paroles de Cénabre jure avec le désespoir glacé de son caractère et sa tranchante solitude. Hélas! nous pourrions multiplier les exemples de clichés et autres fadaïses. C'est à croire qu'à la suite du succès de Sous le soleil de Satan, la maison Plon, soucieuse de conserver son poulain en odeur de popularité, glissa auprès de Bernanos un conseiller technique, cette plaie de l'honnête nature.

Quoi qu'il en soit, l'air du roman est vicié. La syntaxe en souffre. Elle se perd fréquemment dans des phrases torturées: "Telle crise, une fois dénouée, quand on l'a vue se multiplier jusqu'au pullulement, la denrée périssable, désormais sans valeur, achève de pourrir dans les antichambres." (12). La simplicité est sacrifiée à l'effet géométrique. De longues phrases s'étalent, ponctuées par un excès de virgules. Enfin, Bernanos abuse de l'emploi des italiques. Vraiment, il n'est pas à l'aise. Il ne parvient ni à se maintenir de plain-pied, ni à s'effacer. L'éprouvé que ce roman fut pour lui nous est abondamment signifiée. Mais aussi, quelle densité de l'analyse et combien d'admirables Dies irae crèvent le pauvre encens de quelques pages malencontreuses.

Nous l'avons déjà suggéré, Bernanos ne veut pas ériger en procédé esthétique ce qu'il avait réussi dans Sous le soleil de Satan. Il veut pénétrer son sujet d'une réalité surnaturelle sans avoir recours à un cadre immuable. C'est pourquoi, découvrant sans doute un parallèle entre la rencontre de Donissan et de Mouchette, dans Sous le soleil de Satan, et la scène entre Cénabre et Pernichon, il écourtera subitement cette dernière, ne laissant à Pernichon qu'une vision trop passagère de son âme.

Dans L'Imposture, Bernanos tâtonne vers un art du surnaturel sur lequel bâtir des romans neufs et indépendants. Ses intrusions répondent à cette recherche, car il essaye d'orchestrer le thème du surnaturel à ses propres commentaires.

A cet égard, on notera l'emploi fréquent de l'adjectif "surnaturel" - procédé facile qu'il abandonnera dans les autres romans.

Sa recherche d'une formule viable n'a pas été vaine. C'est dans L'Imposture que Bernanos découvre son art du surnaturel. On y trouve l'annonce, la préfiguration, des oeuvres à suivre. Traversée de scènes bouleversantes, L'Imposture sertit, pour le moins, d'exercice esthétique. Mais certes, Bernanos ne l'eut jamais commencée s'il l'avait considérée comme un essai technique. Le degré même de l'échec indique la qualité de l'enjeu.

Sa découverte v est celle d'une âme ouverte à Satan, rendue à la paix glacée du Prince de ce monde: "L'enfer où le désespoir même est étale, où l'océan sans rivages n'a ni flux ni reflux" (142); "L'enfer que vous habitez est le plus froid" (57). Dorénavant, dans la symbolique de Bernanos l'enfer sera le froid, Dieu sera le feu, et la terre restera cette "pellicule refroidie d'un astre où mugit toujours l'abîme souterrain" (141). La route vers la perdition est également fixée par L'Imposture. Les protagonistes des autres romans - à part la "nouvelle" Mouchette, lointaine soeur de la criminelle enfant de Sous le soleil de Satan--emprunteront la pente nocturne suivie par Cénabre et Guérou.

La première étape vers l'abîme est l'intelligence, contemplation stérile que la curiosité pourrit: "Son intelligence extraordinairement volontaire fut toujours contre la grâce sa meilleure arme" (66). Un orgueil monstrueux secrète le mensonge dont l'être se nourrit insatiablement. Dégagé de son âme par cette imposture assumée comme énergie spirituelle, le pécheur en arrive à ne plus s'aimer, à se dédoubler à telle profondeur qu'il observe avec une abjecte volupté le mal absorber son âme. L'être double en vient à "se dissoudre dans la haine surnaturelle dont il est né" (65). Alors éclate un obscène aboiement qui est le ricanement convulsif du possédé -- rire, dont, après L'Imposture, l'écho rebondit à toutes les pages de Bernanos: "Il écoutait avidement sa propre voix, il y trouvait un soulagement infini.... et parfois il riait, d'un rire étrange" (57). De ce moment-là, Satan se regarde amoureusement dans le froid miroir d'un être appelé au plaisir de s'avilir, condamné au désir de se venger de son âme immortelle. En se dévorant, "il se retrouvait comme s'il n'avait jamais vécu" (35). Un silence de plomb tombe sur l'homme sans remords, il s'ouvre au vertige de son éternité: "La place n'est pas vide, il n'y a pas de place du tout; il n'y a rien" (34). Cénabre est

alors au bout de lui-même, au bout de sa course, Dieu ne lui accordera qu'un dernier cri.

Dans la descente de Cénabre vers le vide, véritable itinéraire mystique du péché, on reconnaît les étapes englouties par Ouine. Sur le plan romanesque, Cénabre et Guérou sont les Pères de Ouine selon la faute, avec cette différence capitale: Ouine est un Cénabre qui se voit, ayant conscience de qui il dépend, il est un Cénabre à même de profiter des progrès que Bernanos a fait dans la connaissance de la chute, il est un Cénabre devenu "bouche et orifice," ouvert au vide.

Bien sûr, l'étendue équivoque du caractère de Ouine provient aussi de ce qu'il doit à Guérou. Car, si son itinéraire est celui de Cénabre, Ouine ressemble étrangement à Guérou, autre amateur d'âmes. Comme lui, il est mou, gras, malade. Comme lui, il incline les êtres au néant. Telle description de Guérou pourrait s'appliquer intégralement à Ouine: "...intelligence dont la recherche enragée a quelque chose d'héroïque, mais qui, livrée à elle-même, réduite à se dévorer ainsi que l'animal légendaire, s'épuise à mesure qu'elle avance et s'arrête condamnée sur la route affreuse qui aboutit ensemble à la perfection et au néant" (127).

Ce qui distingue Monsieur Ouine de L'Imposture est un triomphe plus puissant de l'ambiguïté, et, de la part de Bernanos, une dangereuse maîtrise de la composition suivant un rythme symphonique aux limites de la cohérence romanesque.

Il est paradoxal d'observer qu'outrant L'Imposture, Monsieur Ouine est une réussite. Le ricanement incontrôlable de Cénabre, par exemple, devient celui de toute une paroisse déchuë: "Un rire contenu qui ressemblait au claquement de cinq cents mandibules affamées s'acheva dans une sorte de grondement sourd et prolongé."¹⁴ C'est que dans Monsieur Ouine la démesure de L'Imposture est monumentale, organique. Elle anime l'oeuvre. Bernanos n'y lutte plus, il s'est laissé emporter par les crues d l'ambiguïté.

L'Imposture éclaire la suite de la création de Bernanos. Sa valeur n'est pas seulement dans sa richesse comme source, mais aussi dans ses accès fulgurants. Par moments, L'Imposture atteint des hauteurs insoutenables. Nous pensons particulièrement au moment où Cénabre jette à terre l'abbé Chevance, à celui où il déchire l'âme du mendiant, cet imposteur rocambolesque, en qui Cénabre cherche à tuer tous les

mensonges, les seuls appuis du pauvre guignol. Nous pensons aussi à l'extraordinaire description du délire de Chevance à l'agonie.

C'est d'ailleurs le personnage de Chevance qui fixe les éléments essentiels du héros-prêtre de Bernanos: un homme balourd, gauche, incapable de s'exprimer, mais ébloui par la Charité, écrasé sous le poids d'un mystère qui le fait trébucher au monde.

Et cependant, malgré l'analyse magistrale de Cénabre, celui-ci nous reste plus obscur que Chevance, le saint bredouillant. Les gestes de Dieu nous sont plus sensibles que ceux de Satan. A cela, Bernanos crierait: La couardise de l'homme moderne est d'ignorer celui qui se complait en lui, de se refuser à l'affronter!

Après L'Imposture, les romans et les essais de Bernanos cherchent à percer les murailles du péché derrière lesquelles s'abrite l'homme, à l'empêcher de se "refaire une conscience," à lui donner le besoin du risque, et à le jeter sur la place brûlée de soleil en combat singulier contre son terrible maître subitement dévoilé.

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1. Les enfants humiliés (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), p. 197.
 2. Lettre d'août 1926, dans G. Bernanos, essais et témoignages recueillis par Albert Béguin (Paris: Ed. du Seuil, 1949), p. 41.
 3. Les enfants humiliés, p. 120.
 4. Dans G. Bernanos supra, p. 277.
 5. Cité par Luc Estang, Présence de Bernanos (Paris: Plon, 1947), p. 91.
 6. G. Bernanos supra, p. 42.
 7. Les enfants humiliés, p. 120.
 8. Nous autres français (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), p. 65.

9. Voir notamment Les enfants humiliés, pp. 115-123 et passim.
10. Le chemin de la Croix-des-âmes (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), p. 256.
11. Les enfants humiliés, p. 1961.
12. L'Imposture (Paris-Genève: Plon-La Palatine, 1947), p. 81.
13. Voir pp. 35, 39, 42, 56, 65, 68, 69, et passim.
14. Monsieur Quine (Paris-Genève: Plon-La Palatine, 1947), p. 305; voir aussi p. 307.

European Elements in Mid-Western Literature

by John T. Flanagan, University of Illinois

One of the commonplaces about the literature of our country is that it began originally as the product of European tradition and American environment. These are the two basic factors. No matter how much the culture which the early immigrants brought across the Atlantic has been modified and no matter how much the environment has been changed, they remain significant. In the course of time, naturally, the way of life established at Plymouth or Jamestown, at St. Augustine or Santa Fé, was transformed into something more harmonious with a new world. The frontier, in particular, required adaptations probably very far from the minds of those who signed the Mayflower Compact or followed Coronado across the western plains. But still, the language we speak today, the laws that govern our lives, the systems of property and land tenure we accept, the religions we have faith in, the literature we cherish, all of these stemmed from Europe. Thus, the civilization of the western world imposed an initial pattern upon the great land mass across the Atlantic, whether it was discovered first by Leif Ericson or by Christopher Columbus, and we are grateful for our heritage.

What is true of the nation as a whole is also true of its parts. Indeed, the national process was repeated on a regional pattern. First laterally along the eastern seaboard, then as far as the first mountain barrier, then across or through the mountains via such routes as the Cumberland Gap, along the westward-flowing rivers to the Mississippi, and finally over the great plains to the Rockies and the Pacific Coast--such was the course of the culture which was imported in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and in less than 300 years spanned a continent. Nothing in world history can quite match the westward progress of the American frontier, ever-moving, not always directly, not always evenly, but never static, and never stopping until it reached the final ocean barrier of the Pacific.

One does not expect a great literature to come from frontiersmen. They are normally too busy securing the minimum essentials of life--food, shelter, security--to worry about the things of the mind, and certainly they do not have the chance to recollect the emotion in tranquility which Wordsworth thought was a requirement for the poetic art. And yet a fair number of those who first penetrated the American wilderness were literate and cultured men. Even today I think we are inclined to forget how much and how well they wrote.

Among the Spanish and French and English who explored America in the early days there were few professional writers. Those who came first were soldiers and adventurers, missionaries and fur traders, scientists and land agents. But many of them wrote books. Various motives impelled them to do so. Any man travelling in strange lands is tempted to keep a record of his experiences. Hence journals were written and published. European sponsors of various expeditions required reports, and reports were produced. After the English had established a foothold along the Atlantic littoral, prospective immigrants wanted maps, topographical information, estimates of expenses, advice about routes and locations. As a consequence, a whole stream of gazetteers appeared. Thus the first so-called literature about the Middle West was produced by foreign visitors and was practical rather than imaginative, prosaic rather than emotional. But literature like the Christian heaven has many kingdoms. And who shall deny entrance to the earnest and the gifted?

In the largest sense, it seems to me, Europe has influenced the literature of the Middle West in three ways:

- a. Foreign-born writers, travellers or visitors; wrote about the Middle West for European audiences. The reports that were written in English were freely circulated on both sides of the Atlantic. Works in foreign languages were eventually translated although a few interesting volumes remain locked in their original tongues.
- b. Foreign-born writers emigrated to America, settled in the Middle West, and became part of the national and even the regional tradition. The more important works of those who continued to write in their native languages were translated and made available to a large domestic audience.
- c. Many American writers have focused their attention on the problems of the immigrants, their adjustments to new conditions, and their slow assimilation into American society, whether rural or urban.

I should like to develop these points. The literature of the Middle West goes back at least as far as the French Jesuits of the seventeenth century who explored the Wisconsin, Illinois, and Mississippi rivers and circled the Great Lakes. Their reports, the work of solitary and persecuted men who often suffered incredible tortures ad maiorem Dei gloriam, make up the famous Jesuit Relations. Père Isaac Jogues venturing as far west as Mackinac, Père Claude Dablon reaching the Sault Ste. Marie and eventually heading all the

Canadian missions, Père Claude Allouez circumnavigating Lake Superior in a birchbark canoe, Père Jacques Marquette finding the Mississippi in 1673--these were primarily men of action dedicated to a cause, but they also left reports which we treasure.

A more active writer, though less strictly reliable in his accounts, was Louis Hennepin, a Belgian-born Recollect priest who accompanied La Salle on his famous voyage of 1680, reached the confluence of the Illinois and Mississippi, and was the first white man to ascend the Father of Waters as far as the cataract which he christened the Falls of St. Anthony. Indeed one might well claim Hennepin as the first middlewestern writer, even though he wrote in French for a European audience. His Description de la Louisiane, published in 1683, was the most extensive account of the upper Mississippi Valley known at the time, and his subsequent volumes, Nouveau Voyage, 1696, and Nouvelle Découverte, 1697, remain fascinating narratives. A little later Lahontan and Charlevoix produced valuable travel reports. The erudite Jesuit Charlevoix, once the tutor of Voltaire, travelled from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico and wrote an important treatise in his Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle France, 1774, on the Indian society which he found. These books, eagerly read by later generations, had a strong influence on subsequent writing. One of the most popular books of the late eighteenth century, Jonathan Carver's Travels, 1778, borrowed material on Indian cultural and tribal life from Charlevoix.

It is impossible to describe the spate of books about America that came from the pens of European travellers in the nineteenth century. Their authors were men as widely different as Chateaubriand and Volney, the ornithologist Audubon and the scientist Rafinesque, the Italian Giacomo Beltrami, seeking the true source of the Mississippi, and the German prince Maximilian of Wied-Neuwied, observing the fur trade along the upper Missouri. Probably no more famous book on the United States has ever been written than the Democracy in America of Alexis de Tocqueville (Paris, 1835). Tocqueville travelled widely in the eastern sections of the country and strove to give a detailed account of the operations of the American political system. But the theory and practise of government was not his only interest. He also was fascinated by the social life of the new world. His wide training permitted him to make valid analyses and comparisons, and because of his shrewd insights, his book remains a classic today. Observers of a different type were two feminists who concentrated their studies on American society and the position of women. Fredrika Bremer, widely known Swedish novelist and writer, came across the Atlantic

primarily to see what kind of land it was that attracted so many of her fellow countrymen. After crossing the Great Lakes she visited the Swedish settlements in Wisconsin and Minnesota, descended the Mississippi, journeyed overland through the deep South, and returned home via Cuba. Her Homes of the New World, translated into English in 1853, provided a detailed account of American domestic life and gave much attention to the role of the Indian squaw in the Sioux country and the negress in the slave states. Harriet Martineau, the daughter of a distinguished English Unitarian, wrote several volumes about American life and filled her Retrospect of Western Travel, 1838, with intelligent comment on a wide variety of places and scenes. It is interesting to compare her picture of Cincinnati, at that time the most important cultural center of the Middle West, with that sketched by Mrs. Frances Trollope in the widely read Domestic Manners of the Americans. Mrs. Trollope, who had her own troubles in inaugurating a bazaar in the Queen City, is more caustic and more amusing, but Miss Martineau's comment is certainly more sympathetic and probably more valuable.

The number of Englishmen who made the grand tour of the Middle West before the Civil War was legion and included army and navy officers, actors, clergymen, and journalists. Captain Marryat's Diary in America is lively and fresh still, the natural product of its choleric author. Basil Hall's book of travels is more comprehensive and less detailed. John Bernard has given us some choice comments on the Cincinnati theater. And those parts of Charles Dickens American Notes which relate to the Ohio Valley are justly famous even though he did describe the great Mississippi as "an enormous ditch, sometimes two or three miles wide, running liquid mud, six miles an hour." These books, because they were written in English and because their authors were in most cases already well known, found a large audience. Technically of course they belong to the literature of another country, but they reveal an important aspect of the connection of Europe with the Middle West.

For obvious reasons French and English travellers produced the bulk of the early books written by foreigners. But as the nineteenth century advanced other observers came, saw, and wrote. Few authors were more prolific or more widely read than Karl Postl, an Austrian who used the pseudonym of Charles Sealsfield and who produced volume after volume of "transatlantische Reiseskizzen." A rival in popularity was the German Friedrich Gerstäcker, author of Die Flusspiraten des Mississippi and various other tales of adventure and exploration. Nor must we forget Heinrich Möllhausen, called "the German Cooper," most of whose fifty

romances are available only to a German-reading audience. The Norwegian novelist Knut Hamsun, whose fiction brought him a Nobel Prize, spent some time in Chicago and Minneapolis and later wrote Fra det moderne Amerikas aandsliv, a bitter indictment of American life which is still untranslated. Scandinavian writers of course continue to be interested in that part of the United States which has attracted so many of their countrymen. Johan Bojer's novel The Emigrants in 1924 acted as a kind of stimulant to the work of Rölvaag, and recently the Swedish novelist Vilhelm Moberg has been engaged on a trilogy of immigration, the second volume of which, Unto a Good Land, concerns the arrival of a group of peasants in the St. Croix Valley of Minnesota.

The first phase of European influence on middlewestern literature is abundantly clear then. Foreign-born writers came to see and to report. At first they wrote a factual, documentary record; later they turned to imaginative writing in the form of fiction. But all their work specifically ties the European tradition with the American midwest environment. Let us pass to the second phase.

Little of the writing of the first generation immigrants has genuine belletristic value. A vast amount of it was chronology, landscape description, or information, often a kind of promotional writing for future settlers. The best of this might be represented by the books of Morris Birkbeck, the gifted English Quaker who founded a colony at Albion, Illinois, in the 1820's and would have contributed greatly to the state had he lived longer. Among the racial groups who for a time preserved their own language the Norwegian emigrants to the Middle West were particularly literate and articulate. It has been estimated that about one hundred Norwegian-American novels were published during the nineteenth century, many of them yet untranslated. Among the writers of fiction about the Middle West who remain virtually unknown to the English reader are Tellef Grundysen, Johannes Wist, and Peer Strømme. The name of Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen is more familiar since this versatile teacher, journalist, and critic produced many volumes in English and wrote in Falconberg and The Mammon of Unrighteousness novels with Minnesota and Ohio settings. But the great example of the immigrant writer who contributed significantly to American literature is Ole Edvart Rölvaag.

Rölvaag came to South Dakota as a young man, benefited from a delayed education, and spent most of his adult years as a member of the faculty of St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota. Here he taught the Norwegian language and history, did promotion work for the Norwegian Lutheran Church, and managed to write several novels, conspicuous among which is

the trilogy about settlement on the western prairies: Giants in the Earth, Peder Victorious, and Their Fathers' God. In these novels Rölvaag blended his own heritage and experience with observation and reading to produce the best portrait ever made of the immigrant prairie farmer. Rölvaag's Per Hansa and Beret are among the great figures of American literature--he the optimistic, energetic, lusty fighter, she the neurotic, guilt-conscious, timid wife. Ironical indeed is the destiny which selects Beret for survival and which transforms her into a kind of matriarch in the community. For the wife has in essence almost none of the qualities which make the successful pioneer, while the husband seems ideally fitted to adjust to a new way of life and to succeed despite racial, cultural, and occupational barriers. In the later chapters of the trilogy the terms as well as the central figures of the struggle change. The problems of the second generation come to the fore, and a duality of culture and religion replaces a duality of temperament. But Rölvaag wrote from the heart, and fortunately his imagination and his technique were equal to his emotion. Published originally in Norwegian but translated almost immediately into English, these three novels remain one of the real achievements of twentieth century American literature.

Before proceeding to the final phase, the treatment of European immigrants and their problems by native American writers, I must be guilty of another truism: that the Middle West is extremely heterogeneous. Certainly the melting pot theory which Crèvecoeur proposed back in 1782 is nowhere better applicable than here. Consider today the large German settlements in Cincinnati, Milwaukee, and St. Louis; the Polish areas of Detroit and Chicago; the Swedes and Norwegians of Minneapolis. As early as 1817 Lord Selkirk brought Swiss settlers to the Red River Valley. Only a little later Cornish miners came to the Michigan copper country and the Keweenaw peninsula. Icelandic fishermen live along the shores of Lake Superior, and Finns and Slavs work the iron mines of the Mesabi Range in northern Minnesota. Marietta and Vincennes and Prairie du Chien have not forgotten their French origins, and the tulip fields around Holland, Michigan, are proof of the contributions made by Dutch colonists. In the Gary steel mills, according to the rough lines of Carl Sandburg, "bohunks" and "wops" and "niggers" work side by side. I like to think of my own native city of St. Paul, capital of Minnesota, as founded by the French, made prosperous by Yankees from New England, settled by Germans and Swedes, and run by the Irish.

Over fifty years ago Hamlin Garland pointed out the great literary possibilities of the immigrant groups in the

Middle West, along the rivers and lakes and in the cities. And today we have a large body of fiction devoted to such themes. It is convenient to discuss some of these books according as they relate to rural or urban subjects.

Twentieth century writers especially have been greatly interested in the assimilation of foreigners in rural areas. Willa Cather's Nebraska novels are excellent examples. In My Antonia, in O Pioneers! in "Neighbor Rosicky," she drew perceptive pictures of first generation Swedes, French, and Czechs striving to make a living as wheat farmers. Like Rølvaag's Norwegian fishermen these people were not husbandmen by experience and knew almost nothing about farming. In addition to linguistic and religious barriers they were striving to overcome technological ignorance. Many succumbed, but the second generation was almost invariably successful. Miss Cather sometimes allows them too easy a triumph but she always remembers that they are aliens whose occupational problems are less vexing than their social inferiority.

Many other recent farm novels present similar characters and problems. In Feike Feikema's This Is the Year the farmers are Frisians and the scene is northwest Iowa. Feikema is less interested in dramatizing cultural adjustment, however, than in describing farm drudgery and the ignorance of farmers. Martha Ostenso in Wild Geese portrayed Finnish and Icelandic homesteaders near the Canadian border. Herbert Krause in novels like Wind Without Rain and The Thresher dealt with German farmers in western Minnesota and the perpetuation of certain standards of morality and conduct in primitive areas. In several stories set in the small towns of upper Michigan, Skulda Baner introduced typical Swedish groups and depicted their transported culture.

Many of the big middlewestern cities have not yet found talented interpreters and the problems of their alien residents have gone largely untouched. One looks in vain for significant, artistic fiction about almost any aspect of Cleveland, Milwaukee, Kansas City, Des Moines, Akron, Toledo. But Chicago is quite another matter, and the novels about Chicago represent admirably the handling of racial groups in an urban environment.

It is interesting to note that the Chicago naturalistic writers of the 1930's and 1940's have been concerned almost exclusively with European immigrants and with their social and economic plight. In James Farrell's long novels about Studs Lonigan and Danny O'Neill it is the Irish who are the protagonists, the Irish of Chicago's South Side, Roman Catholic in religion, Democratic in politics, lower middle class in the economic hierarchy. Willard Motley has written

about certain Italian groups along Halsted Street. Nelson Algren in The Man With the Golden Arm concerned himself with the seamier aspects of life among Polish and Slavic groups. Albert Halper has portrayed the Jewish workers in a mail order house; and, if we can consider for a moment colored people as aliens in the Windy City, Richard Wright in Native Son has given an unforgettable picture of the negro in Chicago, underprivileged, confined to substandard dwellings, the city's most neglected group. Each of these novelists has emphasized a different ethnic group and has been faithful to its social equilibrium.

But it is time to conclude. Probably not many of us here today are F F V's or lineal descendants of the "May-flower" colony. Probably most of us can trace our ancestry not to one but to several European countries. For the United States is a melting pot, and Americans are hybrid, hyphenated, diversely compounded, and polylingual--the last, I am afraid, only by metaphor. We have no need to be ashamed of or embarrassed by our origins. Perhaps our present position of superiority and power is a direct result of our blending. But it is useful sometimes, and perhaps a bit sobering, to think of our past and of the all-important contributions of the Old World and its people.

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Zur deutschen Bergwerkssprache¹

by Judy Mendels, Cedar Crest College

Vor hundert Jahren schrieb Jacob Grimm in der Vorrede zum Deutschen Wörterbuch:

Zu beklagen ist, dass auch die Bergmannssprache, die schon seit Georg Agricola und Mathesius reiches Material darbietet, noch unerschöpfend und ohne gelehrte Erläuterung, deren sie bedürfte, zusammengestellt ist.

Man kann diese Aussage jetzt noch unterschreiben, denn, obwohl die Bergwerkssprache von Geologen, Historikern, Ärzten und Ingenieuren studiert worden ist, haben sich die Philologen mit Ausnahme von Göpfert, der in der ZfdW (1902) eine Liste von Bergwerkswörtern aus Mathesius' Sarepta oder Bergpostill (1564) mit Erklärungen gegeben hat, doch wenig um sie gekümmert.² Wohl liest man in jeder Geschichte der deutschen Sprache, dass die Fachsprache der Bergleute wichtig ist, weil sie "auffällig rein von fremden Bestandteilen" geblieben sei,³ aber damit hat es sein Bewenden und ein Beweis für die Behauptung wird kaum geliefert. Die Etymologie der Bergwerkswörter zeigt, dass die Feststellung richtig ist.⁴

Die G e s c h i c h t e der deutschen Bergwerkssprache spiegelt die Entwicklung der Bergwerksindustrie. Die ältesten Bergwerke sind im 8./9. Jahrhundert von den Franken in den Alpenländern gebaut worden.⁵ Aber die Bergleute führten ein Nomadenleben und zogen dorthin, wo die Ausbeute am reichsten zu werden versprach. Waren die Bodenschätze erschöpft, so suchten sie ihr Glück wiederum anderswo. In solcher Absicht zogen die Franken aus dem Süden nach dem Harz und arbeiteten um 980 auf dem Rammelsberg bei Goslar, wo man jetzt noch den Frankenberg kennt. Sie vermischten sich mit den Niedersachsen, die sie den Bergbau lehrten. Diese Sachsen wiederum zogen Ende des 12. Jahrhunderts dem Südosten zu und liessen sich in Freiberg, in dem neuen Lande Meissen, nieder (wo die "Sachsenstadt", jetzt ein Teil von Freiberg, nach ihnen benannt wurde). Dort betrieben sie ein Silberbergwerk. Zweihundert Jahre später siedelten Meissner und Bergleute aus dem Erzgebirge wieder nach dem Norden über, wo sie die zerstörten Bergwerke bei Goslar zu neuer Blüte brachten. Im 16. Jahrhundert aber nahm die Kolonisationszeit ein Ende und die Bergleute wurden sesshafte Bürger. Zur selben Zeit fand auch die Entwicklung der Bergwerkssprache einen Abschluss und war in den späteren Jahrhunderten nur wenigen Änderungen unterworfen. Die Fugen ihres Sprachgebäudes weisen durch Spuren aus dem Obd., Ndd., und Ostmd. ihren Entwicklungsgang.

Aus der Zeit, da die süddt. Bergleute im Bergbau die Hegemonie innehatten (9. - 14. Jh.), datieren Wörter wie Schweif (die gelbe Erde am Gangende); Letten (für Klee oder Lehm); Zechstein (wo Zech die obd. Form von zäh [vergl. engl. limestone] ist); püchen (durch klopfen das Erz zerstückeln). Die ndd. Bergleute lieferten (10. - 14. Jh.) Schacht; Schicht; Lachter; Treckwerk (neben heutigem Tragwerk); kloppen (neben süddt. puchen). Der Haupt - bestand der Bergwerkssprache aber ist ostmd. und hat sich im 14. - 16. Jahrhundert ausgeprägt. In dieser Zeit blühten in Sachsen zuerst die Silberbergwerke in Freiberg bis Ende 15. Jh. und später diejenigen in den Töchterstädten Sankt Annenberg und Marienberg, ebenso die Werke in den Städten am Rande des Erzgebirges: Chemnitz, Zwickau und Joachimsthal. Von dort kennen wir: Quergant für Zwerchgang; Teuffe für Tiefe; Saal für Sohl.

Der Entwicklung der Bergwerkssprache können wir nicht nur in geographischer Hinsicht, sondern auch in ihrer Chronologie Schritt für Schritt folgen. Aus den ältesten Zeiten (9. - 14. Jh.) haben wir Urkunden und Berggesetze. Beide sind ursprünglich lateinisch abgefasst worden, aber die Bergwerksworte wurden, als unübersetzbar, auf Deutsch eingefügt. Wir finden z.B. den folgenden Satz in Jus Regale Montanorum (13. Jh.):

Fuint enim in profunditate argenti fodinarum fosse, que vulgariter sump vocantur, vel congeries cū cespitibus tamquam parietes, quo vulgariter tham dicitur.⁶

So erschienen stollo, werchi, chubli, schichte. Im 14. Jh. wurde ausschliesslich die Muttersprache benützt. Dazu bilden die deutschen Bergwerksgesetze für die Zeit vor 1500 die wichtigste Sprachquelle.

Das Studium der Bergwerks-sprache begann, als mit der Entwicklung der Bergwerksindustrie auch das Interesse der humanistischen Gelehrten auch die kamäleonische Fachsprache, deren Worte jedesmal anderen Inhalt zu haben scheinen. Schon Ulrich Rühllein von Kalbe, der Freiburger Arzt, der um 1500 das erste Bergwerksbuch herausgab, hat diese Eigenart der Bergwerkssprache bemerkt.⁷ Ph. Bech spricht in seiner Uebersetzung von Agricolas De re metallica ausführlich über die "Unverständlichkeit" der Bergwerkssprache⁸, und ähnlich äussert sich der Lutherschüler und Joachimsthaler Pfarrer Johann Mathesius. Aber Petrus Albinus drückte sich am deutlichsten aus, als er schrieb:⁹

In dem auch etliche dadurch mögen abgeschreckt werden/das die Bergleut^e viel eigne Namen und Wörtlein der mancheley/dinge...haben...und die nicht ein jeder scribent wissen oder verstehen kan/weil dieselben zumal wol so visirlicht und wunderbar/ja auch der Landart jmm^r anders sein/das sie auch einem der gleich weit wandert/und grossen fleis drauff leget/schwer auszulernen sein/dieweil sie nach den unterscheidnen Landen/und derselben gelegenheit/so wol auch nach den Zeiten/darinnen sich allzeit andere ingenia finden...verändert werden.

Im 17. Jh. gerieten die deutschen Bergwerke während des 30-jährigen Krieges in Zerfall. Die Sprache blieb unverändert, und die Autoren, welche in diesem Jahrhundert Bergwerke beschrieben, folgten kritiklos ihren Vorgängern. In der Zeit des Rationalismus begann man die Bergwerke wieder herzustellen, wodurch neuer Reichtum ins deutsche Land floss. Die Bergwerkssprache wurde abermals mit Fleiss studiert, jedoch stützten sich die Gelehrten des 18. Jh. weniger auf das, was sie aus dem Munde des Bergmanns hören konnten, als vielmehr auf die Bücher früherer Fachleute, die man zu schweren Folianten kompilierte. Schon im Jahre 1518 hatte Peter Schöff^r, Drucker zu Worms, als Appendix zu von Kalbes Bergbüchlein, eine Liste von Bergwerkswörtern mit Erklärung, wahrscheinlich das erste Fachwörterbuch in deutscher Sprache, herausgegeben. Später sah in Agricolas De re metallica eine Wörterliste mit lat. Uebersetzung das Licht. Hauptsächlich aus diesen beiden Quellen schöpften die Verfasser des 18. Jh. 1710 fängt Christoph Hertt^wig mit seinem Neuen und Vollkommenen Berg-Buch an, worin die Erklärungen von Schöff^r abgeschrieben sind. Und diesem Verfasser haben wir schliesslich die Definitionen der Bergwerkswörter in Benecke-Zarncke und DWB zu verdanken;¹⁰ 1711 folgt Leibnitz' Scriptores rerum Brunsvicensium, eine Sammlung der Bergwerksgesetze; 1734 gibt Minerophilus sein Bergwerkslexikon, worin man wörtlich Agricolas Definitionen wiederfindet, heraus. Heutzutage stellt das 80-jährige Buch von Veith die meist benutzte Deutungsquelle dar, und Neues wurde seither kaum geleistet. Wie sehr ein W ö r - t e r b u c h der Bergwerkssprache aber von Nöten ist, möge aus den folgenden Beispielen erhellen.

Welchen nach Landschaften verschiedenen Wortinhalt ein Bergwerkswort aufweist, kann das Wort Fletz illustrieren. Es bedeutet in Freiberg: Lagerstätte, deren Einfallen weniger als 20 Grad beträgt; im Erzgebirgischen Eybenstock: Lager mit weniger als 12 Grad Gefälle; in Thüringen bezeichnet Fletz nur eine Lagerstätte, welche aus Mergelschiefer besteht, in der Schweiz aber muss ein Fletz Kohle und Erz

enthalten, im Siegerland wiederum sind Braunkohlen erforderlich. Aber auch in ein und derselben Gegend kann ein Wort je nach seiner Verwendung die Bedeutung wechseln, sodass leicht Verwirrung gestiftet wird. So versteht man unter Geschick, abgeleitet von schicken = (in ursprünglicher Bedeutung) bilden, gestalten:

- a. die Materie, die die Erze erzeugt, also: die gestaltende Materie (man glaubte nämlich dass die Erze durch "Vermählung" des Quecksilbers mit dem Schwefel gezeugt wurden).
- b. die Eignung der Gänge zur Erzeugung (zur Erzbildung).
- c. schmale Erzgänge (das, was gebildet ist).
- d. Gänge im allgemeinen.
- f. schmale Erzadern, die in der Richtung des Hauptgangs verlaufen.

Für das hohe Alter der Bergwerkssprache sind die folgenden Merkmale bezeichnend:

- a. Das Vorkommen von artikellosen Ausdrücken wie: vor Ort arbeiten.
- b. Frühe Vereinfachungen haben schon im 16. Jh. Windschacht (Schacht, der zur Luftzufuhr dient) zu Winschet und Feldort (eine zur Untersuchung der Lagerstätte ausgehauene Strecke) durch Volksetymologie, weil die Strecke ausserhalb des Erzganges gehauen wurde, also wie eine Fehlstrecke erschien, zu Fehlert umgewandelt.
- c. Viele Wörter haben ihre alte, ursprüngliche Bedeutung beibehalten; so bedeutet z.B. Adel des Ganges dessen Reichhaltigkeit, was an die ahd. Bedeutung reich, mächtig erinnert. Wetter wird in der Bergwerkssprache für Luftzug gebraucht; was der Grundbedeutung Luft, Wind noch nahe steht.¹¹ Andere Wörter änderten ihre Bedeutung und dadurch geben Zeugnis von dem Fortschritte der neuen Technik, die sich im 16. Jh. zu entwickeln beginnt. Fahrt datiert aus dem frühen Mittelalter, als die Bergleute an Seilen in die Grube hinunterrutschten (hinunterfahren). Im 16. Jh., und auch jetzt noch, ist Fahrt das geläufige Bergwerkswort für Leiter. Im selben Jh., wo das Bergwerk Eigentum der Arbeiter oder wenigstens der Arbeitsgeber wurde, erinnert das Wort Lehen, ein Grubenfeld von sieben Lachtern im Quadrat (ein Lachter ist sechs Fuss), an die Zeit, da die Bergleute vom Regalhern das

Bergwerk zu Lehen erhielten, während der Herr Besitzer blieb. Der Stollen, im 16. Jh. Gang, zur Regulierung des Grundwassers und der Ventilation gegraben, war ursprünglich das Holzgerippe zur Stützung des Ganges, ahd. stollo (Stützbalken), mhd. stollen (Stütze). In den heutigen Wörterbüchern haben diese Wörter noch dieselbe Bedeutung wie im 16. Jh., der Zeit der Stabilisierung.

Andersseits sind viele Bergwerkswörter nicht vor dem Ende des 15. oder Anfang des 16. Jh.'s entstanden, z.B.: In einer Uebersetzung des Iglauer Bergrechts Ende des 14. Jh.'s wird von "einem voruoftigen poten" gesprochen; hundert Jahre später heisst es an dieser Stelle "ein bergverständiger geschworne Fronbote".¹² Wörter wie Flemlein (Goldsplitterchen), Flitter, Flötz (horizontale Gesteinschicht), bergläufig (geläufig im Bergwerk) erscheinen zur selben Zeit wie bergverständlich. Darlag (Anteil des Bergmanns an den Baukosten des Bergwerks) wird von dem Augsburger Drucker Erhard Ratdolt schon nicht mehr verstanden¹³ und ist im Laufe des 16. Jh.'s von Zubuss verdrängt worden.

Wie jede Fachsprache kennt auch die Bergwerkssprache Bedeutungsverengerungen. Sumpf, Seife, Schlich, ursprünglich Moor, Bächlein, nasse Gesteinssplitter bedeutend, haben den Gedanken an Feuchtigkeit verloren und dienen seit dem 16. Jh. als Termini technici für den tiefsten Teil eines Schachtes, resp. für Geröllmasse und Metallkörnchen. Umgekehrt gibt der folgende Fall Bedeutungserweiterung: Rasen heisst die Erdoberfläche schlechthin, gleichgültig ob es dort Gras gibt oder nicht. Für den Laien wirkt es schliesslich nicht sehr einleuchtend, wenn Feld Gebirge bedeutet, Gebirge aber Gestein, während mit dem Worte Berg erzloses Gestein bezeichnet wird. Ebenso paradox ist es, wenn mit einer Strasse oder Stross eine stufenweise ins Gestein gehauene Treppe gemeint wird, während ein Stuff ein kleines Stück Erz ist.

Charakteristisch für die i n n e r e F o r m der Bergwerkssprache ist das Konkretisieren von abstrakten Begriffen. Hangendes oder Liegendes ist die Ober- bzw. Unterseite des Ganges; Ausgehendes ist der an die Erdoberfläche grenzende Teil; Witterung bedeutet nicht nur die aus der Erde aufsteigenden Dämpfe oder die Wirkung des Wetters auf das Gestein, sondern auch das verwitterte Gestein selber. Die Konkretisierung der Wörter Gäntz (ahd. ganzi - sanitas) und Feule (ahd. fûli - Verwesung), die in der Fachsprache des Bergmanns Gestein in seiner vollen "Reife", respektive durch Verwitterung mürbe gewordenen

Gestein bedeuten, hängt mit dem Glauben an das Leben der Erze zusammen. Die Bergleute und auch die Gelehrten huldigten bis ins 18. Jh. der Ueberzeugung, dass Erze aus der "Vermählung", d.H. aus der Verbindung, von Quecksilber und Schwefel gezeugt werden. Wie alle lebendigen Kreaturen werden und gedeihen, so wachsen auch die Erze (das Wort Gewächs wird in der Bergwerkssprache als Synonym von Erz gebraucht), sie reifen und verfaulen wieder. Dieses Konkretisieren ist ein Merkmal der materialistischen Geisteshaltung des Bergmanns. Er hat nur ein Ziel: Erze auszugraben und Geld zu verdienen. Daher auch die Bedeutungsentwicklung der Wörter höflich und tröstlich (Chance auf Gewinn, Ausbeute versprechend), artig (Erze versprechend). Aber in seiner Seele, die in einer Welt der Geheimnisse und auch der Gefahren lebt, wirkt sich ebenso ein Hang nach Mystik aus. Das tote Material wird belebt. Der Gang hat einen Rücken und einen Schweif. Er wirft einen Bauch (hat reiche Erzausbeute) oder, mit derselben Bedeutung, er streckt die Füsse. Zieht er die Füße zu sich, so bedeutet dies, dass er keine reichhaltigen Erze birgt. In der unheimlichen, gefährvollen Bergwerkswelt keimt eine Sehnsucht nach der blühenden Erde, nach Tieren und Pflanzen, die dem Bergmann, der des Holzbedarfs wegen eng mit der Forstwirtschaft verbunden ist, bekannt und vertraut sind. Der Laufkarren heisst der Hund. Wenn der Gang blüht, zeigt er Gestein bis an die Ausmündung; die kleinen Silberkörnchen, die wie Blütenstaub auf dem Stein kleben, werden angeflogenes Silber genannt. Eine weitere Aeusserung der Mystik des Bergmanns liegt im Gebrauch der Zahlen. Drei, vier und sieben sind die Grundmasse. Eine Fundgrube mass ursprünglich drei Lachter, ein Lehen war sieben Lachter im Quadrat, dem Entdecker eines Erzlagere wurden sieben Lehen verliehen. Ein Bergwerk war in vier mal 32 Stämme oder 128 Kuckse (Teile) aufgeteilt.

Die Bergleute hatten ihre eigenen Redewendungen und Sprichwörter. "Kübel und Seil einwerfen" bedeutete "mit Bauen anfangen"; "Es ist über die Hängebank" = "es ist aus der Grube". Häufig hörte man behaupten, dass der "Deutsche oft eine Kuhe mit einem Stein wirft welcher besser als die Kuhe ist", und "Ein Bergmann wisse seines Gutes kein Ende."¹⁴

Trotz ihres exklusiven Charakters aber hat die Bergwerkssprache zur Bereicherung des deutschen Sprachschatzes beigetragen, was teilweise Martin Luther, dem Bergmannssohn, zu verdanken ist. Er scheint der erste gewesen zu sein, der gediegen, wo es rein, hundertprozentig bedeutet, aus der Fachsprache in die allgemeine Sprache

eingeführt hat.¹⁵ In seiner Bibelübersetzung heisst es in Jer. 4.19: "Mein Herz pucht mir ym Leibe"; dabei hat er aber an den Rand der Hs. klopft geschrieben. Andere Bergwerkswörter bei Luther sind brüchig, (für untreu) und Schicht, das spätere Herausgeber durch Rotte ersetzten.

Wir sehen hieraus, dass die Expansionszeit der Bergwerkssprache zusammenfällt mit der Blütezeit der Bergwerksindustrie im 16. Jh. und es ist also kein Zufall, dass gerade damals die ältesten Bergwerksbeschreibungen sowie die ältesten Wörterlisten entstanden sind. Es wäre jetzt die Aufgabe des Philologen, sich mit diesen Quellen zu befassen und in einem neuen und vollständigen Wörterbuch allen Sprachinteressierten zu erschliessen. Zwar bietet die Bergwerkssprache wegen des willkürlichen Bedeutungswechsels ihrer Worte viele Gefahren und manche Crux, sie ist geheimnisvoll und dunkel wie das Bergwerk selber, aber eben deshalb übt sie eine unwiderstehliche Anziehungskraft aus, und wer in ihre unterirdischen Stollen und Gänge hinabsteigt und mit dem Abbauen beginnt; wird mit leuchtenden Schätzen ans Tageslicht zurückkehren.

1. Vorlesung, gehalten am 23. April 1954 in der "University of Kentucky Foreign Language Conference", und in Zusammenarbeit mit meinem Freund und Kollegen Dr. Linus Spuler, Fahrwangen/AG, Schweiz, zu einem Artikel umgeformt. Für kritische Bemerkungen und gewissenhafte Verbesserungen möchte ich Herrn Spuler hier meiner herzlichsten Dank sagen.
2. Es ist eine Marburger Diss. von P. Gerhard, Wörterbuch der Siegerländer Bergmannssprache (1922), erschienen; während Hildegunde Petschnigg in Graz mit einer Diss. über die steirische Bergmannssprache beschäftigt ist.
3. A. Bach, Geschichte der deutschen Sprache (Heidelberg, 1949), S. 163.
4. Z. B. scheint selbst das allgemein als slävisch betrachtete Wort Kux, das im 16. Jh. im obd. Guckis lautet und Bergwerksanteil, Aktie bedeutet, germanischer Herkunft und mit gucken, schauen, verwandt zu sein. Es hat eine Bedeutungsentwicklung stattgefunden, deren Parallele wir im Lateinischen finden. Gucken, schauen, ist lat. speculari. Von diesem Wort kennen wir die

Ableitung spekula, Ort des spähennden Schauens, Warte. Zu gucken aber gehört ein Subst. Guggus, Fenster, Guckloch. Spekulation ist ein Unternehmen, wobei man sich die Situation anschaut und aus Wahrscheinlichkeitsgründen auf Erfolg rechnen zu können glaubt. Spekulieren heisst sich mit Spekulationen beschäftigen, und dies ist wieder zu vergleichen mit nl. gokken (spekulieren), ein Wort, das aus der Judensprache hergeleitet wird und das ursprünglich mit gucken identisch ist. (Vergl. Diefenbach, Gloss. Lat.-Germ. (1857), S. 623: "visere, schouwen vel gokken".) Also könnte Guckes, dasjenige womit man spekuliert, von gucken abgeleitet sein (DWB IV, 1-6, 1039). Nun heisst gucken im ndd. kucken, und so erklärt sich, warum wir im 16. Jh. im im Süden Guckis, im Norden aber Kuckis (= Kux) antreffen. Es ergibt sich also: Kux < Kuckis/Guckis < gucken/gokken.

5. A. Zycha, Das Recht des Ältesten deutschen Bergbaus bis ins 13. Jh. (Berlin, 1899) und H. Ermisch, Das Sächsische Bergrecht des Mittelalters (Leipzig, 1887).
6. A. Zycha, Das böhmische Bergrecht des Mittelalters auf Grundlage des Bergrechts von Iglau (Berlin, 1900), S. 136.
7. Siehe die unpubl. Diss. (Baltimore, 1953) von Judy Mendels, Das Bergbüchlein, S. 8.
8. Ph. Bech, Vom Bergkwerck (Basel, 1557), Vorrede, S. 4.
9. Meissnische Land-und Bergk Chronica (Dresden, 1590), S. 3.
10. Bergbüchlein: sein ligends ist sein gesteyne/darauff er leit. Herttwig, S. 264: Ist das Gestein unter dem Gang, worauff der Gang gleichsam lieget. Lexer, Mhd. Hndwtb. I. 1916: das Gestein unter dem Gange, worauf der Gang gleichsam liegt.
11. Kluge-Götze, Etym. Wtb. (16. Ausg., 1953), S. 873.
12. Zycha, Das böhmische Bergrecht, S. 121.
13. In Ratdolts Ausgabe des Bergbüchleins (Augsburg, 1505) steht "der Lag".
14. Albinus, Op. cit., S. 88.
15. DWB IV. 202.

Frans G. Bengtsson (1894-1954)

by Lawrence S. Thompson, University of Kentucky

With the death of Frans Gunnar Bengtsson on 19 December 1954, at the age of sixty, modern Swedish literature lost one of its most original personalities. Bengtsson is known to English-speaking readers only for The Long Ships (1954; translation by Michael Meyer from Röde Orm, sjöfarare i västerled, [1941], and Röde Orm, hemma i österled, [1945]; translation of first volume only by Barrows Mussey in 1942 as Red Orm). However, Bengtsson's literary production is much more extensive, and he has distinguished himself not only as a novelist but also as a poet, and essayist, and a biographer.

Between the time when he took his baccalaureate ("fil. kand.") at Lund in 1920 and his licentiate there in 1930, he published two volumes of poetry and one collection of essays. The poetry, Tärningkast (1923) and Legenden om Babel (1925), used historical themes and was distinguished for stylistic virtuosity and formal perfection. The first collection of essays, Litteratörer och militärer (1929) immediately attracted attention for profound insights and an attitude of complete indifference to moral prejudices in the search for the historical truth. Characteristic of the whole tone of Bengtsson's creative work is a sentence on one of the first pages of Litteratörer och militärer: "At that time he was twenty-five years old and had just committed his first murder and his first longer poem, both of them quite innocuous debuts."

Two other collections of essays, Silversköldarna (1931) and De langhåriga merovingerna (1933), were written with the same effort to enliven history with the color of a spectacle staged for the gods of the future with a script by one of the most competent masters of descriptive prose in our century. Bengtsson sought for the potentially colorful in tedious old chronicles and memoirs and transformed it into ballads in prose. It is quite natural, therefore, that he should select Charles XII as the subject of his first longer work. Voltaire and Dr. Johnson had already recognized the incomparable hero of Narva as an almost inexhaustible source of inspiration for the creative writer. In The Vanity of Human Wishes (1749), published exactly four decades after Poltava, Johnson wrote somewhat pompously:

He left a name at which the world grew pale,
To point a moral or adorn a tale.

Bengtsson, fascinated like all other Swedes by the great warrior king, published his two volumes of Karl XII:s levnad

in 1935 and 1936. Awarded the Swedish Academy's annual prize in 1938, this great biography translates the dry facts of history into a moving drama, replete with details and imagery that only a poet could envision. If the essays are, in a sense, prose ballads, the biography of Charles XII meets every qualification of the epic except the quality of metrical composition.

One more collection of essays, Sällskap för en eremit, appeared in 1938. One other significant aspect of Bengtsson's literary production prior to The Long Ships should be noted. During the 1920's he earned a high reputation as a skilled and sympathetic translator. His Swedish versions of Walden (1924), Paradise Lost (1926), and the Song of Roland (1929) have almost made these works Swedish classics, much like the Tieck-Schlegel Shakespeare or the Florio Montaigne.

The Long Ships is Bengtsson's crowning achievement as a creative writer. Bengtsson had been fascinated by the Middle Ages from the beginning of his literary career, and he had already touched on the Viking period in his essays. It is natural that he should choose the age of Harald Bluetooth for his second major work, for this era holds the same relative position in the Scandinavian Middle Ages as that of Charles XII does in modern times. For the hero of his tale Bengtsson selected Röde Orm, a fictitious chieftan from his native Scania. Orm's saga was written a full millennium after men began to spin yarns about Egil Skallagrimsson and Grettir the Strong, but Bengtsson's skill as a storyteller is no whit inferior to the Icelanders.

Bengtsson takes Orm a-viking when he is hardly a man. Orm survives years of Moorish captivity and escapes back to Scania with a treasure. Smitten by Ylva, daughter of Harald Bluetooth, he trails her to England where he is converted and wins her for his bride. After years of comparative peace, Orm embarks on his last great foray, this time far to the south of Kiev, to the weirs of the Dniepr where the Bulgar's gold is hidden. After one more adventure against a renegade priest, Orm and his brother-in-arms, Toke Gray-Gullson settle down to age contentedly and tell their grandchildren how they rowed the Caliph's galley for my lord Almansur.

Here is the world of the year 1000 and thereabouts as seen by the untutored but by no means stupid Northmen. At the same time Bengtsson is able to present naive, plain-spoken humanity, stripped of convention and prejudice. Orm allows himself to be converted, but he sees much of the sham of the new religion and clings steadfastly to many things that are good in the old. He had already accepted Allah in

Spain, for he had a thoroughly practical view of religion: "We men of the north do not worship our gods except in time of necessity, for we think it foolish to weary them with babbling." Orm travelled widely and took the world at its face value. He was unimpressed by Ethelred's London, barely a village compared with glorious Córdoba. He never sailed his long ship into the Bosphorus, but he heard all of the stories of the glitter and wickedness of Miklagard from his unfortunate brother Are.

Bengtsson is a master of the shrewd Scandinavian peasant wisdom, much of which he absorbed as a child in Scania where his father superintended a large estate. In The Long Ships he expresses this wisdom in few words and has it reinforced with a battle-axe. He has a marvelous sense of legend and history. He writes as the ancient story teller might have spoken, but, without offense to the reader, he cautiously suggests the insight that only a modern can have. He maintains a sense for the archaic in the dialogue and the narrative, but it is never strained or artificial.

As a poet Bengtsson reaches his greatest heights in The Long Ships. Toke, the poet of the tale, outdoes any southern improvisatore with his extemporaneous verse, wholly in the eddic vein but with all the strength and originality of the ancient singers. A single example, felicitously rendered into English by Meyer with clever adaptation of the alliteration in the Swedish, must suffice. Toke sees Bluetooth's fleet fade into the distance and he goes to release Mirah, the Moorish lass he kidnapped in a box from the court of the Danish king. There had been a narrow escape, for the Harald had sat on the box to quaff a farewell cup of ale. Toke sings with sly humor:

Dread the hour
When Denmark's despot
Bulbous sat
On brittle box-lid.
Faintly yet I
Fear my freight be
Broken-boned
By Bluetooth's burden.

Frans G. Bengtsson is essentially a poet in all his work. In the spirit of Carlyle he said: "History is the noblest of all subjects." Even though he is a meticulous antiquarian, a scholar with an enormous background of reading in all the subjects of which he writes, Bengtsson seeks and exploits everywhere the theatrical and the spectacular. He takes his readers to the highest heavens of the Olympian

chronicler and surveys objectively the stage of world history. His essays and biographical studies bring history to life no less than does the tale of Orm's adventures.

For us there is a particularly effective example in his treatment of the blood and gore of our Civil War. With perfect logic he portrays the transformation of the rebel general Stonewall Jackson from a profoundly religious professor into the fabled warrior of the Second Bull Run and Antietam. Again there is the brilliant portrait of melancholy U.S. Grant, the man who was a failure in everything but war. He takes the reader on the terrible retreat of the grand Army from Moscow, the fateful expedition of Alexander's elite troops into the depths of Asia, the adventures of a Scottish mercenary in the banditry of the Thirty Years War in Germany.

It is characteristic of Bengtsson to seek the romantic elements in war and ages of unrest. He is fascinated by the similarity of war to chess, a favorite pastime as he once indicated in an essay. Above all our Great Rebellion found in Bengtsson an enthusiast who would have been welcome at any Civil War Roundtable from Chicago to Atlanta. He contrasted the romance of the Thirty Years War or the Civil War with the meaningless stupidity of modern wars, and he had a special distaste for the depressing realism of many authors who wrote about World War I. He felt that the great leaders who emerged in the wars of the past could never find a proper rôle in a modern war simply because the armed conflicts of our day offer no possibility of action for a distinguished leader or a military genius. Had Røde Orm lived in our time he could never have slipped through the net of Bluetooth's Gestapo, and he would have been subjected to an effective brain-washing by the Caliph's thought-police.

Bengtsson has grave misgivings about the democratization of modern culture, the transformation of the human spirit into uninspired, uniform mediocrity. This position has much to support it if we try to imagine a Stonewall Jackson or a Røde Orm as the products of our American public schools of the twentieth century. Bengtsson admired many second-rate historical novelists such as Hervey Allen and Kenneth Roberts simply for their ability to ignore psychological analysis (which he detested) and to portray men of action in vivid colors. However, Bengtsson was under no illusions about literary quality. Among modern writers, he singled out Joseph Conrad as a special favorite, a creative artist who was free from any taint of "western European provincialism" and could review mankind with the justifiable aloofness of the artist but with the breadth of the man to whom nothing human was alien.

Frans G. Bengtsson developed no new style, but he does represent a strong reaction to the weak and colorless language of many historical essayists and even novelists of our time. He seeks the full flavor of the times of which he writes, and if his poetic instincts overwhelm academic conventions, he has no compunctions about junking the latter. In language as well as form and thought Bengtsson is an Einzelgänger. His genius elevates him above the hacks who flood the literary market place with historical biography and fiction, and his sense of the essential poetry of history never lets him drop to the melodramatic. He may have cherished a profound pessimism about the destiny of modern man, but poetry was no triste métier for him. Rather it was la gaie science. Like Villon, whose ballade of the dames of yesteryear he admired intensely, Bengtsson brings an "insubstantial pageant" to his readers.

Frans G. Bengtsson belongs to no school of creative writers or historians. He would have been promptly rusticated from any into which an overzealous critic might have matriculated him. He may not endure through the centuries that have laughed and wept with Villon, but for those of us who can revel in a pure display of genius, a rousing story, and a mastery of prose and poetic style, Bengtsson has a firm position in twentieth century literature.

Some Significant Recent Books in the Field of
Mediaeval Literature*

Isabel S. T. Aspin, ed. Anglo-Norman Political Songs. Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1953 ("Anglo-Norman Text Society," XI.) Pp. 180.

This is a critical edition of sixteen short thirteenth and early fourteenth century Anglo-Norman poems. None of the poems are readily available in other modern editions. The content is political, social, and religious satire. The editor has done a careful and in some respects distinguished job in establishing her text.

S. C. Aston. Peirol, Troubadour of Auvergne. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1953. Pp. 190.

This edition of Peirol contains a biographical-critical introduction, texts, translations, notes, glossary, and music for seventeen poems. Meticulously careful treatment of the text and a thorough knowledge of the times, language, and literary antecedents of Peirol make this book one of the more important editions of troubadours in recent years.

James H. Baltzell, ed. The Octosyllabic Vie de Saint Denis. A Critical Edition. Geneva, E. Droz, 1953, Pp. 70.

This is the first edition of the fifteenth century Vie de Saint Denis (first bishop of Paris, fl. c. 250; not Dionysius the Areopagite) in verse, based on a longer prose version written three centuries earlier. There is a detailed analysis of authorship, the manuscript, literary relationships, and versification.

Gustave Cohen. Le Théâtre français en Belgique au moyen-âge. Brussels, La Renaissance du livre, 1953. Pp. 110.

This brief survey of mediaeval drama in Flanders is a useful account of one aspect of the mediaeval literature of what is now Belgium.

*In each subsequent issue of the Kentucky Foreign Language Quarterly significant books received for review will be listed with short annotations. The classical, mediaeval, Romance, and Germanic fields will be covered in rotation. Old and Middle English literature will not be included in the notes on mediaeval literature.

Gustave Cohen. La Vie littéraire en France au moyen-âge. Paris, Tallandier, 1953. 2nd ed. Pp. 486.

Perhaps the most important work of a prolific but original scholar, this survey of French mediaeval literature offers many rewarding insights. Cohen gives special attention to those works which appealed to his "temperament," but at the same time we find a high coincidence with the titles generally recognized as the most important. Despite the personalized approach, this work may well be recognized as Cohen's best.

A. H. Diverres, ed. Froissart: Voyage en Béarn. Manchester, University Press, 1953. Pp. 159.

This selection from Froissart for the University of Manchester's "French Classics Series" is the account of the chronicler's trip to the court of Gaston Phoebus, Count of Foix, late in 1388. The introduction is a useful appreciation of Froissart as an artist and a writer.

Carin Fahlin, ed. Chronique des ducs de Normandie par Benoit (publiée d'après le manuscrit de Tours avec les variantes du manuscrit de Londres: V. II. Uppsala, 1954. ("Bibliotheca Ekmaniana," 60.) Pp. 642.

This valuable and well executed edition contains the lives of Richard I, Richard II, Richard III, Robert, William the Conqueror, and the latter's three sons.

Francis Fergusson. Dante's Drama of the Mind: a Modern Reading of the Purgatorio. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1953. Pp. 232.

This volume is an attempt to re-define the meaning of the Purgatorio for modern man. Fergusson traces the development of the form of the poem (pointing out, incidentally, the reason for dividing it into four days), and he makes many original observations of primary value to Dante scholars.

Grace Frank. The Mediaeval French Drama. New York, Oxford University Press, 1954. Pp. 296.

This important survey in twenty-five chapters offers little that is new, but it is exceptionally well written

and brings the subject up to date as far as a single-volume treatment is concerned. Mrs. Frank shows a thorough acquaintance with dramatic traditions and actual theatrical practice in mediaeval France. Her work will have a permanent place as a reference tool, and, in addition, is highly readable.

Albert Henry, ed. Chrestomathie de la littérature en ancien français. Bern, Francke, 1953. ("Scripta romanica selecta," III-IV.) V. I. ("Textes"), pp. 350.

Although designed as a textbook, this work can serve as a useful introductory vademecum to Old French literature in general. Of the 193 selections in the first volume, twenty are from epics, seventeen from historical works, thirteen from scientific treatises, and twelve from romances of adventure. Themes as well as authors and genres are well represented.

Albert Henry, ed. Les Oeuvres d'Adenet le Roi. T. II. Buevon de Conmarchais. Bruges, De Tempel, 1953. ("Publications de la Faculté de Lettres de l'Université de Gand," 115.) Pp. 222.

This new edition of the works of the thirteenth century poet Adenet le Roi contains only the text of Buevon de Conmarchais. The critical commentary and the glossary will be published later.

R. T. Holbrook, ed. Maistre Pierre Pathelin. Reproduction en fac-similé de l'édition imprimée en 1489 par Pierre Levet. Geneva, E. Droz, 1953. Pp. 78.

In his four introductory pages to this useful facsimile Holbrook points out that this edition of the famous farce is the first complete one.

John Esten Keller, ed. El Libro de los engannos. Chapel Hill, N. C., University of North Carolina Press, 1953. Pp. 56.

Although there have been three previous editions of this unique Spanish version of the eastern transmission of the Sindbad story, none were wholly satisfactory. Keller has made many improvements on the editions of Comparetti, Bonilla, and González Palencia.

Pierre Le Gentil. La Poésie lyrique espagnole et portugaise à la fin du moyen-âge. II. Les formes. Rennes, Plihon, 1953. Pp. 505.

This detailed account of verse and versification in mediaeval Spain and Portugal is a useful reference work, examining every formal aspect in greatest detail. Le Gentil properly points out the significant French influence on mediaeval poetry in the Iberian peninsula. Although his bibliographical apparatus is untidy at times, it will nevertheless prove most useful.

Enok Opsund. Íslánd í sogetida. Oslo, Fonna Forlag, 1954. Pp. 249. \$3.50.

This book provokes a lucid, well-organized survey of Icelandic literature from 930 to 1262. The first three chapters furnish the essential background of the geography, history, and politics of early Iceland, while the main section of the book deals with all aspects of the old Icelandic literature, the sagas, the eddic poetry, the skaldic poetry, historical literature, and the work of Snorre Sturlasson.

C. Rostaing, ed. Constant du Hamel, fabliau. Edition critique avec commentaire et glossaire. Gap, édition Ophrys, 1953. ("Publications des Annales de la Faculté des Lettres, Aix-en-Provence," nouvelle série, I.) Pp. 167.

In this new edition of a well known fabliau there is an important discussion of the manuscripts and the procedure for establishing the text. The tale itself, dealing with the woman who humiliates three suitors, has an important literary history.

Wolfgang Stammer. Kleine Schriften zur Literaturgeschichte des Mittelalters. Berlin, Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1953. Pp. 269. DM 23.60.

These eighteen essays are divided into three general categories: "Wesen und Form," "Deutsche Scholastik und Mystik," and "Niederdeutsches Land". Basic for the yet unwritten history of mediaeval German prose, this collection of essays brings together some of the most important works of a productive and meaningful scholarly career.

Einar Ól. Sveinsson. The Age of the Sturlungs. Icelandic Civilization in the Thirteenth Century. Translated by Jóhann S. Hanneson. Ithaca, N. Y., Cornell University Press, 1953. ("Islandica," XXXVI.) Pp. 180.

Published originally in 1940, this work is a study of the cultural determinants of the age of the Sturlungs. Although the work deals with political, economic, social, and religious history more than literary history, it is an indispensable study for understanding the backgrounds of classical Icelandic literature.

Pauline Taylor, ed. Gerbert de Mez: chanson de geste du XII^e siècle. Namur, Secrétariat des publications, Facultés universitaires, 1953. ("Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de Namur," 11.) Pp. 448.

This meticulous edition of a long (14,795 verses) but important poem is the final part of a study of the four branches of the Geste des Loherains. The study of the language of the scribes and the glossary are competently executed. Notes are limited in number.

G. Turville-Petre. Origins of Icelandic Literature. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1953. Pp. 260. \$5.00.

This survey of early Icelandic literature from the beginnings in pagan Iceland through the twelfth century is perhaps the best treatment in English. There are many sidelights on general aspects of mediaeval Scandinavian culture and history, all skilfully woven into the main narrative. Turville-Petre provides a carefully compiled index and abundant documentation.

Vilamo-Pentti, Eva, ed. Le Court de paradis; édition critique d'après tous les manuscrits connus. Helsingfors, Academia scientiarum fennica, 1953 (Its Annales, ser. B, v. 79, 1.) Pp. 130.

This thirteenth century devotional poem describes a gathering of the angels and saints on All Saints' Day to dance a carole with Jesus and Mary. There are notes on the mediaeval dance (both sacred and profane), bibliographical information, and a dictionary of rhymes. The text has been somewhat overedited.

Bartina H. Wind, ed. Les Fragments du Roman de Tristan: poème du XII^e siècle par Thomas. Leyden, E. J. Brill, 1953. Pp. 235.

A full half century has elapsed since Bédier's edition of Thomas' Tristan in 1902-05. The present edition departs

radically from Bédier's readings, and, in general, the present editor's suggestions are felicitous and based on sound research.

Ludwig Wolff, ed. Hartmann von Aue: Der arme Heinrich. 10. Auflage der Ausgabe von H. Paul, besorgt von Ludwig Wolff. Tübingen, Max Niemeyer, 1953. ("Altdeutsche Textbibliothek," 3.) Pp. 39.

This latest edition of a famous Übungstext has been taken over by a new editor after Leitzmann supervised editions from 1930 on. There are a number of changes in the text itself.

Georges Zink. Le Cycle de Dietrich. Paris, Aubier, 1953. ("Bibliothèque de philologie germanique," XVI.) Pp. 268. 960 fr.

Zink surveys the Middle High German works other than the Nibelungenlied which deal with Dietrich von Bern legend and presents extracts from the following: Buch von Bern, Rabenschlacht, Alpharts Tod; Laurin, Eckenlied, Virginal; Biterolf und Dietleip, Rosengarten. Although the basis of these poems is in an earlier period, Zink points out the essentially courtly tone and the occasional Christian elements.

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L.S.T.

Kentucky Microcards

Series A of Kentucky Microcards (Modern Language Series), sponsored by the South Atlantic Modern Language Association and published by the University of Kentucky Press, consists of important original studies that are not suitable for letterpress publication for reasons of length; limited appeal, or some other technical consideration. It is the purpose of this series to make generally available those scholarly works in the modern languages and literatures which might otherwise remain in manuscript. Bibliography, folklore, linguistics; and literary history will be represented in the content.

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The following titles are available at present:

Kunio Yanagita. Studies in Fishing Village Life. Translated from the original Japanese into English by Masanori Takatsuka. Edited by George K. Brady. Lexington, University of Kentucky Press, 1954. ("Kentucky Microcards, Series A, Modern Language Series, Sponsored by the South Atlantic Modern Language Association," 1.) 2671. 7 cards. \$1.75 to subscribers; \$2.45 when ordered separately. This work was published originally by the Folklore Institute of Japan in 1949, based on research begun in 1937. The isolated fishing villages, located either on small islands off the mainland or on inaccessible promontories along the coast, have a rich field of folklore that differs widely from that found in the mountains. The influence of the sea and the occupation of fishing did much to shape the folklore peculiar to these villages. Yanagita is the undisputed leader of Japanese folklorists.

Kunio Yanagita. Studies in Mountain Village Life. Translated from the original Japanese into English by Masanori Takatsuka. Edited by George K. Brady. Lexington, University of Kentucky Press, 1954. ("Kentucky Microcards, Series A, Modern Language Series, Sponsored by the South Atlantic Modern Language Association," 2.) 481 l. 11 cards. This book was published originally in 1937 by the Folklore Institute of Japan, based on the investigations of a team of folklorists under the direction of Yanagita. Numerous villages isolated in the mountain regions of Japan were studied and information gathered on all sorts of topics connected with folklore: social relations, marriages, births,

deaths and funeral customs, tutelary gods, religious taboos, popular superstitions, evil and good omens, foxes and badgers, strange sounds and sights encountered by lone wanderers, and talismans of all sorts. By pooling their findings and analyzing results, the investigators attempted to determine how widespread or local the customs were. Isolated villages were selected because they had been largely unpolluted by contacts with modern life. The significance of their findings has been widely recognized in Japan.

William Smith Ward. The Criticism of Poetry in British Periodicals, 1793-1820. With a Handlist of Periodicals and a Check-List of Reviews. Durham, N.C., 1943. ("Kentucky Microcards, Series A, Modern Language Series, Sponsored by the South Atlantic Modern Language Association," 3.) 2v. This study examines poetic theory as it is reflected in British magazines during the years 1798-1820 and contains alphabetically by author an analytical checklist of more than ten thousand reviews of volumes in verse. In the main it may be said that the criticism of poetry in the average magazine was designed to maintain the literary status quo of English classicism. Milton and Shakespeare were praised, but it was the Augustans who were held up as models. Genius, originality, and imagination were recommended. Wordsworth's theories of diction and subject matter were welcomed at first as antidotes to the affectation of the Della-Cruscans and the Darwinians, but when they were understood they became the center of strong controversy. Nevertheless, the new poetry and the new criticism was bringing about a slow retreat; so much so, in fact, that despite the routine advocacy of Augustan ideals literary orthodoxy in any real sense was no longer possible.

